



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES & PUBLIC PROTECTION
DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & HOMELAND SECURITY



Connecticut General Assembly Public Safety and Security Committee
Public Hearing, February 21, 2013
Governor's Bill No. 6374, An Act Concerning Coordinated Long-Term Disaster Relief and Recovery

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Good morning, Representative Dargan, Senator Hartley, and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. I am William P. Shea, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Emergency Service and Public Protection (or DESPP), with jurisdiction over the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (or DEMHS) and I am testifying in support of Governor's Bill Number 6374, An Act Concerning Coordinated Long-Term Disaster Relief and Recovery. This bill would establish the Connecticut Coordinated Assistance and Recovery Endowment, or CT CARE, Fund, an independent foundation created to accept and administer donations from private sources to assist in meeting individual and/or municipal needs that are left unmet when federal, state and other resources have been exhausted.

Connecticut's residents have experienced five natural disasters in the last two years, as well as the Sandy Hook shooting. For each of the five natural disasters, Governor Malloy has requested and received a Presidential declaration that enabled cities and towns, and in some cases, individuals, to receive FEMA disaster assistance. While this federal disaster aid is certainly welcome, it often does not allow the recipient to return to pre-disaster financial condition.

There may also be emergency events that have a drastic effect on a community but do not meet FEMA thresholds for assistance. An example of such an incident is the tornado that devastated a section of Bridgeport on June 24, 2010. Despite our efforts, we were unable to secure a FEMA disaster declaration. Nonetheless, at least 55,000 people were without power in the summer heat for up to 10 days and dozens were injured. The majority of the affected community members were renters without insurance, many lost possessions, and fifty families were left temporarily homeless.

A Fund such as the CT CARE Fund would provide valuable assistance to such people affected by disaster by providing a mechanism for private donations to be collected and distributed in an organized and collaborative manner. The CT CARE FUND will also give Connecticut a vehicle for participating in charity events like the recent Sandy concert at Madison Square Garden, in which a mechanism such as CT CARE may have made it easier for Connecticut to obtain additional benefits for Connecticut residents and municipalities.

With the support of Governor Malloy, DEMHS has created a Long Term Recovery Working Group that brings together federal, state, local, and private sector partners to coordinate long term recovery from disaster. This CT CARE legislation adds a significant piece to that recovery process, by establishing a fiscally independent framework that will create objective guidelines and protocols to be set into motion once FEMA disaster assistance and other avenues of aid have been exhausted.

It is particularly important to note that the proposed board of the CT CARE Fund includes the five local chairs of the DEMHS regional emergency planning teams (or REPTs), as well as other state, local, and private sector representatives. Also, the Fund's distribution committee will include the DEMHS regional coordinator for the region affected, as well as the chair of the DEMHS REPT for that region, and the CEOs of the municipalities affected. The statutory mission of DEMHS is to provide an integrated and coordinated program of emergency management and homeland security. This legislation recognizes the importance of collaboration while strengthening the resilience of the state and its residents.